F10 Arch 4050/6050: Richard Preiss

Furniture Making

“It must be useful. It must work dependably. It must be beautiful. It must last. It must be the best of its kind”

Alfred Dunhill

Course Information
Course Number: 4050/6050-G01
Weekly Course Schedule: Tues./Th. 9:30 – 12:15
School of Architecture, UNC Charlotte
Richard Preiss, repreiss@unc.edu, Storrs rm.130
Spring/2015

Course or Studio Abstract (Premise, Description, Objectives)
Contemporary furniture production methods have an automated life of their own, and the activity of the small shop maker might be viewed as a dwindling cultural vestige, or a graspable opportunity for creative artists to establish their place in a receptive, though ever changing design environment. The premise of this class is the advancement of the students’ capabilities and understandings into the realm of quality, the spirit, and nature of fine furniture making, and the habits and traits of quality craftsmanship. The expression of individual design, the understanding of traditional and contemporary materials and markets, and the demands and frustrations associated with the making of built objects, are complimentary skills that once undertaken personally, enable designers to better define, appreciate, and achieve their objectives.

Methodology, Procedures, Skills/Outcomes, and Course Organization
The class is organized to take each student, regardless of prior experience, successfully through the entire furniture making process, from idea to final polish. We will begin with simple notions of form, materials, and construction techniques, and advance to more complicated designs and making skills. The semester will be divided roughly in half. There will be two assignments that will focus on understanding the potential of wood to express simple objects and stretch your comprehension of the malleability of the material. Project work is intended to encourage safety, material observation, and form generation. Craftsmanship will evolve by requiring contact with as many of the machines, hand tools, and powered portable tools as possible. Completion of a project that most strongly expresses your understanding of the materiality of wood and its implications for small furniture design is the primary objective.

Course or Studio Readings
The Complete Manual of Woodworking, Jackson, Day, Jennings
Wood Bending Handbook, W. C. Stevens, N. Turner

Requirements and Grading
This class requires determination and time for the student to succeed. Enrollment is restricted to 3rd year and up architecture majors. Grades will be determined by completion of required assignments, attendance, creative expression, and craft. Individual advancement, as determined by a self-evaluation and discussion with the instructor, will also be a factor in grade assignment. Physical size of individual work is not a factor for evaluation. Understanding of the nature of the work, as reflected in design and manipulation of materials, expressed as craft, is paramount.